

CHAPTER SIX

...And They Grew in Wisdom

Wilderness country and the bitter forces of nature were puny competitors to the will and determination of Provo Valley's pioneers.

Adversity, misfortune, grief—these were everyday words in Provo Valley. Yet, the "vision" of a better life inspired the early settlers to struggle and persevere against all odds. For many of the people the better life came only after years of toil and sorrow. For others it came in the assurance that their children would live better than they did.

To assure this better life for the new generation, the pioneer people were quick to establish schools in their new valley. Education in the one or two room log school houses was a far cry from the modern educational programs of today. However, it was a beginning and a firm foundation for later growth.

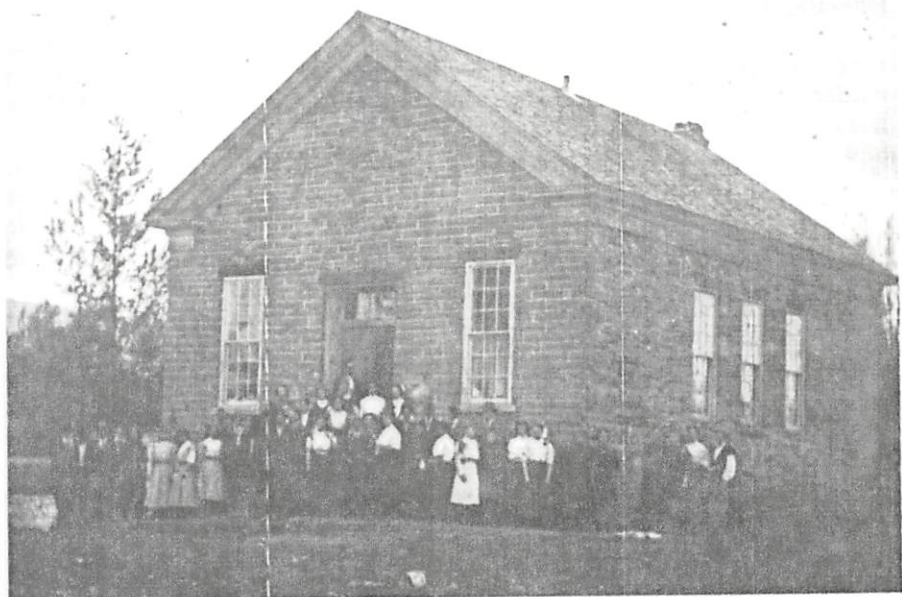
In the early schools, students sat on benches made of split logs supported by wooden legs inserted at a suitable angle in the logs to insure rigid support. They wrote on stone slabs and used damp cloths for erasers. The various grades, or readers as they were known, all met in the same room under the guidance of one teacher.

Tuition for the schools amounted to about \$1.50 per term, which was paid either in cash or produce though most often the latter. Many attended only one term, consisting of about six weeks, since their help was needed on the farms and in the canyons.

The valley's first school was held in the joint community building erected for the July 24th Pioneer Day celebration in 1860. The structure, located on what is now the corner of 3rd North and 2nd West, served as a Church house, school building, dance hall and theatre.

Small schools were quickly developed in each of the communities that sprang up throughout the valley. Typical of the rudimentary education offered is a description given by Henry Van Wagoner in 1933 to Dorothy Holmes. He told of children of all ages in Midway filing into a little one room log school house to sit on slab benches while Simon Higgenbotham instructed them in reading, writing and arithmetic. Thirty students laid down their slates and Wilson readers and ran to nearby ditches for water.

As the valley grew there were 22 independent districts or schools established. Two were maintained in the Center-Lake Creek area, while two more were in Charleston—one near the mound now extending into the Deer Creek Reservoir and one in the upper area near the present Winterton ranches. Two schools were in the Daniel area, one in the



The Sleepy Hollow School, one of Heber's early school buildings.

upper section on the hill near the original James J. Howe ranch, and another in the valley below.

At least two separate schools were maintained in the Midway area, one in the upper and one in the lower settlements before the two joined to form the single Midway community.

In the area north of Heber, three one-room schools were located, one at Riverdale on the corner just north of the Midway road and the intersection of U.S. Highway 40, another near Keetley where the Great Lakes Lumber operation later stood, and the third at Bench Creek above Woodland on the south side of the Provo River.

Wallsburg likewise had a school in the upper valley area known as "Rose Hill" and one on the grounds now occupied by the Wallsburg Ward Chapel.

In these early schools, young people with the ability to read, write and "figure" were used to teach some of the school subjects. John W. Crook, who like his father, John Crook, preserved much of the early history in personal journals, lists the following as some of these teachers:

William Chatwin, Henry Chatwin, C. B. Nugent, David L. Murdoch, Kezia Carroll, Mary Clyde Willis, Thomas Hicken, Jr., Samuel Wing, George Barzee, Margion G. and Charles Shelton, Henry Clegg, Henry Aird, Alfred T. Bond, William Buys, Josephine Cluff, Isabelle Todd Hicken and Heber Moulton.

Others mentioned in the journals who were "imported" or profes-